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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: STABLE SECURITY SITUATION IN BASRAH BOLSTERS CONFIDENCE IN  
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

CLASSIFIED BY: John Naland, PRT Team Leader, PRT Basra, US State  
Department.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) The security situation in Basrah has remained stable since the April/May 2008 Charge of the Knights campaign. That operation largely rid Basrah of the militias that had turned the province into a cauldron of violence and instability. Although occasional IED and IDF attacks continue against Iraqi and U.S. forces, the absence of any large-scale suicide bombings or other major attacks has bolstered the provincial population's confidence in the national government to meet its security needs. People we talked to in every echelon of Basrah society share favorable impressions of the local security situation, generally crediting Prime Minister Maliki for having brought stability to the province.

¶2. (C) Basrawis mainly view security as a central government responsibility. They widely hold the Iraqi Army in high esteem for having maintained security in the province, and see the Iraqi Army as very much in control of security. Anecdotal evidence and limited polling data reveal that the local, popular opinion of the Iraqi Police is less favorable than that of the Iraqi Army. Despite that perception, the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police work very effectively together throughout Basrah province on security issues.

¶3. (C) With the province secure and calm, the PRT observed no evidence of fears that increasing violence outside of Basrah will affect the stability or effectiveness of the provincial government. The concerns that exist about the effectiveness of the provincial government arise not from lack of security, but rather from perceptions of corruption, political infighting, and incompetence. In short, Basrawis expect the provincial government to continue to operate as it has in the past, unaffected by outside events.

¶4. (C) As for the national security situation, Basrawis view the increased violence in Baghdad and other areas of Iraq through a political and/or sectarian lens. They see the violence elsewhere as either a struggle for national political power or the result of various ethnic/religious groups living together and competing for influence and power locally. Since Basrawis credit Prime Minister Maliki with having brought stability to Basrah province, they do not see him diminished in any way by the recent spike in violence. Nor do they see the violence undermining the ability of the national government to govern effectively. The concerns that were voiced about the impact of the increased violence on Basrah were not political, but economic. Some feared that the high-profile attacks in Baghdad could create a perception abroad that Iraq is becoming less stable, discouraging foreign investment, especially in Basrah's growing oil industry.

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